Cothill Policy Documents

ISSR 8 Boarding Policy

NMS for Boarding: 11:1, 5.1, 5.3, 20.1, 20.4, 20.7, 20.8

Date: September 2026
Next review: September 2027

In boarding, Cothill aims to provide a friendly and caring environment that reflects the atmosphere and ethos of home. Boarding facilities, routines, and pastoral support are designed to ensure that both girls and boys have equal access to opportunities, resources and care, taking account of their individual needs. In boarding, staff understand the heightened vulnerability of boarders and take this into account in all aspects of care and support.

Objectives:

- To create an open and trusting atmosphere where pupils feel able to approach any member of the school community, confident that they will be listened to and treated as an individual.
- To develop a climate of tolerance, kindness and trust where harassment, teasing and bullying will never flourish.
- To provide the conditions where boarders' intellectual, physical and emotional needs are met, in an environment which values effort, achievement, kindness and empathy.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of every boarder, by providing an environment that is, as far as is possible, free from physical hazards or dangers.
- To provide a variety of wholesome, tasty and nourishing food for all pupils.
- To develop the pupils' sense of responsibility for self, others and the environment.
- To provide supportive links with parents and guardians.
- To provide accommodation that is comfortable, cheerful and suited to the needs of all boarders and which provides appropriate levels of privacy.

Cothill Juniors:

Cothill Juniors offers pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 a gentle transition into their boarding education. Younger pupils will be able to go home after the end of their school commitments each Saturday until Sunday evening or Monday morning.

Cothill firmly believes in the benefits of boarding. All pupils have the option of being a day pupil or partaking in some flexible boarding as they transition into boarding life. Depending on the pupils' intended Senior School destination, pupils are encouraged to transition to full boarders in Years 7 & 8.

Location of Boarding
The boarders at Cothill are accommodated in three locations:

1. The Main Building (Year 7 & 8 boys and all girls boarding)

Head	George May
Head's Wife	Emi-Lou May
Deputy Head, Pastoral & Head of Boarding	Adam Pearson (Year 3, 4 & 5)
Houseparents	Trina Pearson (Year 3, 4 & 5) Amelia Baker (Girls) Chris Page (Year 6) Ben Twyford (Year 7) Tom Bennett (Year 8)
Assistant Houseparents	Ross Martin (Bowlers) Tim Jackman (Year 7) Rafe Hallet (Year 8)
Assistant Staff	Dan Lane, Rory Griffiths & Chris Ashton.
Head Matron	Sarah Wright
Senior Matron	Laura Marx
Nurses	April Bailey & Amy Whitchurch
	GAP Matrons

2. Bowlers (Year 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Houseparent for Bowlers	Adam & Trina Pearson & Chris Page
Assistant Staff	Ross Martin *GAP Matron*

Operational Management

The Head and his wife or Houseparents have ultimate responsibility for the smooth running of all boarding. The Head Matron has a major role in the day to day running of the house. At least one Houseparent or senior member of Staff will sleep in each boarding house each night.
The Matrons at Cothill are directly involved in the pastoral care of the boarders, particularly at bed times.

'Lights out' times:	Years 3, 4 & 5 (Bowlers):	8.30pm
	Year 6 (Bowlers):	8.45pm
	Year 7 (Main Building):	9.00pm
	Year 8 - Leavers (Main Building):	9.15pm

These times may vary on Saturdays, when pupils watch films or on other evenings, when there are special events, trips, etc

The Houseparents and Matrons are responsible for the welfare of the pupils in the dormitory area. A member of Staff is on duty to assist in ensuring the pupils are well looked after and settle into bed. Matrons ensure that dirty laundry is collected and clean laundry provided each day. Matrons will also take care of any pupils' passports, mobile phones and valuables, which are handed in on a pupil's return to school after a holiday or exeat. Rechargeable electrical items (e.g. toothbrushes & Kindles) are charged by the matrons.

A number of teaching Staff are housed in and around the boarding houses to ensure a healthy Staff presence during evenings, nights and weekends. Houseparents and matrons are responsible for making sure that pupils' lights are turned off at the right time, and for closing fire doors and dormitory doors when the children have gone to sleep. All resident Staff are considered 'on call' 24/7.
The Head Matron creates a list of pupils who are absent or in sick bay. This list is used firstly, to ensure that all pupils are accounted for before lights out, and secondly, to inform any roll call which might take place during a fire alarm. This list can be readily accessed on iSAMS. Login here.

Pupils Going Out
Parents of full boarders need to ask permission from houseparents to take their child out at the weekends. They fill in a request using the 'Orah' app.
All pupils are required to sign out if going off site with their parents, or for an appointment. On Saturday afternoons, a designated member of Staff will be in the car park so pupils can sign out quickly and easily.

Match Days: Staff will endeavour to make themselves aware of those members of their team who are out for the weekend, so that a pupil's parents can take them home after a match. Pupils are, with the member of Staff's permission, allowed to return to Cothill with their parents. *However, no pupil is ever permitted to travel with a friend's parents*, unless that pupil's own parents have been informed & given consent.
On an away match day, Staff must remind pupils that they have to report to them after match tea, before leaving with their parents. All pupils must attend match tea, unless special permission has been organised through the School office beforehand. The member of staff can then sign the pupil out using the 'Orah' app.

Boarders' Induction
It is hoped that all new pupils will have had at least one visit to the school before starting as a boarder. In practice, most pupils visit two or three times, when they will have had a tour of the school and met some of the Staff. Open Days and Assessment Days provide further opportunity for new pupils and Staff to meet. A number of prospective new pupils will also complete a 'taster day' at Cothill and spend a day accompanying a class of pupils their own age with the option of staying overnight.

Before beginning at Cothill, new boarders each receive a *New Pupils' Survival Guide*, which answers some of the many questions all new pupils - and their parents - may have when they start. All new pupils receive instruction and tours from Staff on arrival. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 may well spend the whole of their first day with form tutors, who will help provide guidance, reassurance and instruction.

Year 3, 4 or 5 new boarding pupils receive additional support from Mr. and Mrs. Pearson, who are specifically responsible - alongside the Head and Matrons - for the welfare of Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils in the dorms.

All new pupils are allocated a 'mentor', an experienced pupil from Year 8 who takes their charge under their wing and seeks to help wherever they can. The mentors report back to the Deputy Head, Pastoral. The first Sunday of the autumn term is an opportunity for the younger new pupils to get to know each other better.

Boarding Duties for Resident & Teaching Staff
A number of senior Staff are responsible for boarding duties. These duties are fulfilled in partnership with the matrons. Where GAP students have duties on the boarding side, they are closely monitored.

No member of Staff would take on boarding duties without being appointed to them by the Head. New boarding Staff only fulfil their duties independently, having already shared some duties with a more experienced colleague and when the Head is satisfied that they are able to fulfil their responsibilities reliably and safely. Boarding staff have a review of their performance with the Deputy Head, Pastoral each year. (See *Professional Development Reviews 1: Information*)

GAP year assistant matrons are often recruited from *Letz Live* who interview candidates and provide some induction. Further induction is completed at Cothill, where the Head Matron and Senior Matrons provide help and guidance.

The Boarding Staff ensure that there is orderly behaviour in the dormitories during bedtimes and after lights out. Boarding Staff and Senior Matrons remain on site and on call throughout the night.

Each evening, boarding Staff are encouraged to ensure that pupils come to bed:
- *Correctly dressed.*
- *With a reading book. Some nights (e.g. Saturday, when there is a film) a book is not required. A senior matron or Houseparent will advise.*

After changing into night clothes, showering, brushing teeth, handing in their laundry, visiting the surgery (if appropriate) and having some free time in a common room, the pupils will be sent to bed for reading time. Duty Staff must ensure that a constant patrol of dormitories and washrooms is maintained throughout their time upstairs with the pupils. Disciplinary matters are dealt with using the Boarding Rewards and Sanctions cascade.

Bedtime is a crucial part of the day for the pupils. All are tired, some are over-tired and can be either fractious or over-excited. Thus the Houseparent, matron or duty member of Staff

needs to tread a fine line between ensuring that the pupils are safe, secure, happy, calm and comfortable, while maintaining a firm hold on discipline. Junior boarders may well have film nights, games nights, etc, while Seniors may be permitted to stay up late on special occasions. Treats are, however, the exception, and it is worth remembering that *routine* provides both safety and reassurance for children. See the *Objectives* at the start of this Policy.

When the duty member of Staff says 'good night' and turns out the lights, the pupils are expected to be silent. Boarding Staff will remain until all pupils are settled. The member of Staff must not leave until he/she has checked out with the Houseparent or senior matron on duty. There is no fixed time for the end of a dormitory duty for the member of Staff in the dormitories; they must liaise with the appropriate Houseparent.

A matron is on call throughout the night and a member of the boarding Staff will always be present and on call in the building. An intercom system is in place for pupils to alert the duty matron.

Members of the teaching Staff have significant pastoral roles to play. All Staff carry out duties and they supervise the children's free time until it is time for them to go up to bed.
Sunday outings and activities are coordinated by Adam Pearson.

All staff receive regular safeguarding training in line with KCSIE and the school's Safeguarding Policy. All concerns are reported to the DSL - Adam Pearson.

Telephones
While pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school, they have access to a number of landline telephones.
In the main building, there are two phones available in the Lamp Room, and one wholly private phone in the phonebox in the Yard.
At busy times or in emergencies, pupils are at liberty to ask Jane if they can use her phone in the School Office or the line in the Matrons' office. Pupils boarding at Bowlers have access to two phones.
Use of phones is not permitted after c. 9pm, unless there is some kind of emergency.

Health of Boarders
Boarders have access to medical care throughout the day and night, with trained staff on call at all times. Boarders may visit the school nurse without unnecessary barriers, such as having to wait long periods of time or seeking permission to do so. Support for mental health and wellbeing is provided by all staff, however, children requiring additional support can be referred to a member of staff who is ELSA trained or the school counsellor who visits twice a week. Boarders can also contact the school's 'Independent Person' whose details are found on the Safeguarding Posters around school. Separate policies exist to cover Health and Safety, First Aid, the administration of medicines, fire drills, etc.

Pupil Voice and Raising Concerns
Boarders are encouraged to share their views and participate in boarding life. This is facilitated through regular house meetings, pupil surveys and feedback opportunities. Pupils can raise concerns or complaints to boarding staff, Houseparents or the Designated Safeguarding Lead and are assured these will be taken seriously, handled promptly and addressed fairly.

Timings for Boarders in the Main Building
See the Staff Handbook.

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR BOARDING STAFF

The members of the Boarding Staff assist in the general pastoral welfare of the pupils in the boarding houses (Main House & Bowlers). The members of the boarding Staff are expected to be committed to Cothill's boarding ethos, and dedicated to the wellbeing of all pupils within the school. All boarding staff, including GAP assistants, are recruited under Safer Recruitment procedures and complete induction and ongoing training, including safeguarding.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the evening routine
- Responsible for the welfare and well-being of the pupils
- Responsible for boarding matters, in conjunction with the Headmaster, the Houseparents or the Senior Matron

All duties should be performed in accordance with existing School policies on Safeguarding and Health and Safety.

TASKS

- Working and communicating closely with the Headmaster, the Houseparents or the Senior Matron on all issues relating to the role.
- Being aware of night time fire drill procedures.
- Ensuring that the pupils are comfortable, secure and content. The well-being of all pupils is the main priority.
- Being on time (8pm for Seniors in the Main House, 7pm for Junior boarders).
- Ensuring that pupils come to dormitories correctly dressed (jumpers, ties, etc).
- Ensuring that pupils come to dormitories with a reading book or academic work.
- Supervising children in their dormitories.
- Organising and overseeing activities with the pupils where necessary. This will vary according to the age of the pupils and the time of year.
- Ensuring orderly behaviour in the dormitories.
- Making sure that pupils are silent after lights out.
- Patrolling after lights out until 9pm (Juniors) and 9.45pm (Main School Seniors), or longer, if pupils are not settled.

Pupils in Staff Houses

Pupils are not allowed access to staff accommodation and houses except in exceptional circumstances. This includes access to houseparent and matron accommodation within the boarding houses, as well as the Headmaster's house. Staff should use areas such as the Headmaster's Study, the Matron's Office or the Common Rooms as an alternative location for activities or sensitive conversations.

When the criteria for exceptional circumstances is met, staff must request permission from the Headmaster or the DSL before inviting any pupils into their houses. A risk assessment may be necessary.

NB: In accordance with our Safeguarding Policy **all** Safeguarding concerns should be directed to the DSL - Adam Pearson.

ASP - September 2026

Appendix A Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 Routine: Bowlers Boarding House

Monday to Friday

07.00
Lights on
07.30
Breakfast in the Main Building.
08.15
Head to their form room where the normal school day commences.
19:20
Latest time by which Juniors can tick off in Bowlers
19:50
Get ready for bed
20:00
In bed for silent reading
20:30
Lights out
Year 6 reading and lights out in 15 minutes later.

Saturday Evening

Morning routine - 30 minutes later.
18:30
Return for movie night and tick off.
19:00
Movie start time
After movie: bedtime

Sunday Breakfast

07:00
Lights on and optional lie-in or cartoons in the common room.
08.30
Breakfast in the Main Building.

Sunday Evening

18.30
Tick off
19.50
Up to bed
20.30
Lights out

Appendix B Girls and Year 7 & 8 Routine : Main Building Boarding House

Monday to Friday
07.00 - 07.10
No lights are allowed before 7am but pupils may read from 7am onwards.

07.10am - 07.30
Official wake up time. The houseparents or resident staff and junior matrons wake pupils up while the senior matrons ensure that daily medication is taken and assist with wake up. Pupils dress, tidy their area (duvet, night clothes, teddies etc.) and wait to be dismissed by a member of staff.

07.30 - 07.45
Pupils are dismissed to breakfast by houseparents or resident staff once uniform and rooms have been checked. Dorm stars are awarded for the tidiest rooms and individual stars may also be awarded for pupils who are ready in good time. Music practice takes place at this time for different year groups (see rota).

07.30 - 08.10
Breakfast.

08.15
Pupils go to their form rooms for the start of the school day.

19.30 - 20.00
End of CAPs followed by supper in the dining room or common room for Year 8, free time in common rooms, house meetings and jobs (Year 7). Pupils must make sure that they have a reading book with them before going upstairs.

19.45 - 20.40
Houseparents, Senior Matrons, Junior Matrons and Duty Staff supervise evening chores such as changing into night clothes, putting away clean laundry, handing in dirty laundry (see rota) and brushing teeth. The nursing and matron team ensure that evening medication is taken. Once chores have been completed, pupils may either have some quiet free time or will read.

20.45 - 21.15
Reading time followed by lights out for Year 7.

21.00 - 21.30
Reading time followed by lights out for Year 8.

Girls timings are dependent on Year group and numbers of boarders.

Saturday
Morning routine - 30 minutes later.
19.10 - 19.20
End of free time. Pupils begin to go upstairs.

19.10 - 19.40
Houseparents, Senior Matrons, Junior Matrons and Duty Staff supervise evening chores such as changing into night clothes, putting away clean laundry, handing in dirty laundry (see rota) and brushing teeth. The nursing and matron team ensure that evening medication is taken.

19.30 - 19.45
Pupils go to common rooms for movie night.

21.30 - 22.00
Bedtime and lights out for all pupils straight after the end of the movie.

Sunday
08.10 - 08.30
Official wake up time. The senior and junior matrons wake pupils up and supervise morning routine and chores including getting dressed, tidying rooms and morning medication. Once chores have been completed pupils are dismissed to breakfast.

08.30 - 09.00
Breakfast.

09.00 - 17.30
Activities and free time. Trips are often also organised on Sundays. Lunch is served between 12.30 and 13.30 followed by grub shop.

17.30 - 19.10
Tea (5.30pm and 6pm) followed by free time.

19.10 - 19.20
End of free time. Pupils begin to go upstairs.

19.10 - 20.30
Houseparents, Senior Matrons, Junior Matrons and Duty Staff supervise evening chores such as showers, changing into night clothes, putting away clean laundry, handing in dirty laundry (see rota) and brushing teeth. Senior matrons ensure that evening medication is taken. Pupils have free time in their dorms or games rooms before reading time.

Reading time and lights out as per weeknight schedule.

Appendix C Aims and Principles Poster

Cothill Boarding Aims and Principles

In boarding, we aim to provide a friendly and caring boarding environment that reflects the atmosphere and ethos of home.

Objectives:

• To create an open and trusting atmosphere where pupils feel able to approach any member of the school community, confident that they will be listened to and treated as an individual.

• To develop a climate of tolerance, kindness and trust where harassment, teasing and bullying will never flourish.

• To provide the conditions where boarders' intellectual, physical and emotional needs are met, in an environment which values effort, achievement, kindness and empathy.

• To safeguard and promote the welfare of every boarder, by providing an environment that is, as far as is possible, free from physical hazards or dangers.

• To provide a variety of wholesome, tasty and nourishing food for all pupils.

• To develop the pupils' sense of responsibility for self, others and the environment.

• To provide supportive links with parents and guardians.

• To provide accommodation that is comfortable, cheerful and suited to the needs of all boarders and which provides appropriate levels of privacy.